

MINUTES

Bar Harbor Cruise Ship Task Force

Thursday March 27, 2008

8:30 AM

Council Chambers

Municipal Building

93 Cottage Street

I. Call to Order at 8:32 by the Chair.

Members present: Paul Paradis, Chair; Chris Fogg, Vice-Chair; Anne Krieg, Secretary; Nathan Young; Mary Opdyke; Fred Cook; Amy Powers; Greg Gordon; Charlie Phippen

George Seavey was absent.

II. Excused Absences

None

III. Minutes

February minutes were approved unanimously by a motion from Opdyke, seconded by Cook.

IV. Staff Reports

A. Report from Chair on Council action concerning Cruise Symposium attendance.

Paul and a member of staff will attend this conference in June.

V. Regular Business

A. Continue discussion with Ocean Properties on future plans for West Street and service to Cruise Ship tenders and passengers

Tabled to wait for Eben Salvatore from Ocean Properties to arrive. The Task Force returned to this item when he arrived.

Eben showed a plan dated 3.10.08 and titled Proposed Cruise Ship Screening Facilities Plan

He noted the pedestrian bridge brings people into town more quickly. Concerns had been expressed to the Harbor Committee by this bridge.

Eben indicated the company is planning this construction for 2009. He also acknowledged that he needs to coordinate the queuing, standing, and loading bus areas and that a retail area will also be planned to greet visitors disembarking. In the plan that was shown to the task force, the restaurant will be removed to house the secured facility.

There was some general concern whether this plan means we are moving operations too far from the central business district and be more distant from goods, services, and other businesses.

B. Cruise Ship Fees

i. Tabling discussion and possible action on port development fee to allow for further interaction with the industry

The group discussed the mechanics of making a recommendation.

Amy Powers reviewed the market – Portland has good visitor services but is close to Boston so the market isn't as strong as Bar Harbor. Bar Harbor also has more to offer the visitor. Portland will not be able to dock vessels in Portland as the dock cannot support.

Greg Gordon said Portland is included in the longer itinerary.

The group discussed that by tabling we could talk to the industry before setting a fee.

Ideas the group discussed for needs included:

- Bathrooms (pricing should be including maintenance)
- Harbormaster's Office
- Information center
- Providing another stop for buses – bus handling and ground operations – rider queuing
- Temporary shelter from weather
- Sidewalks – ADA compliance
- Cigarette receptacles/recycling bins for visitors

There was discussion as to what will be part of the T 105 facility.

The task force also discussed optional bus stop areas briefly to note that there are changes that can be made now to support the infrastructure.

A timeline was also discussed. This is important to let the industry know when we are beginning the project.

Nate Young agreed that an MOU is a good mechanism to work with the industry. He noted that the Coast Guard is looking to the Town to provide more security. This enhanced provision of services will need personnel. Providing this operational necessity shows the industry that we are committed to serving the industry.

Anne Krieg noted that we need to separate operations from capital for the fee structure.

Nate moved and Veilleux seconded to table the setting of the fees

In discussion Krieg indicated that the list is still valid so we can work with the industry to help set the priorities. It would be helpful to understand what are the comments from visitors as to what's missing in Bar Harbor when they get off. That understanding of needs may help set the priorities.

All in favor of the motion.

ii. Discussion and possible action on how to best bundle cruise ship fees.

Paul reviewed the table he prepared for the task force.

Harbor Place gets the passenger fee now. The town used to have a tender landing fee to occupy the float. It was noted that Harbor Place charges per passenger.

Discussion of the value of per passenger of a ship docked at the end of the pier was discussed.

Chris Fogg was concerned with the jump in fees for some ships.

Greg Gordon offered that a minimum flat fee for smaller ships could be established and then go to per passenger for larger ships.

Young and Powers noted that we need to coordinate the fees with Harbor Place and we need to decide on the T 105 facility. We need to know what we are offering for services. Young feels strongly it serves the town to take the lead on providing safety and security and convenience for the passenger. He noted this is a town function. Visitor needs to now all of what is available.

Paul Paradis noted that we currently provide a service and the task force indicated that the town should clarify our fees of what it costs to provide services now.

Chris Fogg feels strongly this is a competition to the private sector.

Krieg opined that providing basic services of safety and security and convenience to the visitor is a town function and should not be seen as competition but as the base for the service, not unlike other infrastructure provisions.

Returning to fees, the group discussed that the fee structure outlines what the Town needs to service the operations. Young cautioned that until we know what the fees are for the Harbor Place operation, this discussion could price us out of the market.

Phippen brought the discussion to a menu option for the fees so that the services and needs are outlined and be in keeping with what the study has outlined. He sees bundling fees as one check instead of different payments from different providers is the best method to serve the needs of the industry and assist in the town's administration of the services.

It was noted again by staff that the Coast Guard has indicated they would like to see the Town as a leader for this service provision and be a professional government managed operation. The Coast Guard are concerned that the Town is not the primary responsible party in providing safety and security to passengers on international vessels.

Phippen recommended the menu approach to the fee system. Krieg asked how we can factor in other costs like public relations, environmental monitoring, training, etc. Powers reviewed the Seattle method which includes a Memorandum of Understanding.

Paul and Anne will work on another sheet for task force review for the next meeting. The Seattle method will also be explored by staff.

Fogg felt we need to coordinate with the fees they already pay to the private industry.

iii. Discussion and possible action on annual escalator for fees. tabled

VI. Public Comment - none

VII. Items for next agenda

The task force felt the group should keep on this discussion.

Chris Fogg/Greg Veilleux both requested a second bus stop be a topic of discussion for a possible change this year. Staff will bring a map to the next meeting.

Powers told the task force the industry is interested in local maps. They said they would hand out a map to passengers from the town/chamber.

VIII. Set next meeting time, date and place

- A. Discussion of meeting schedule was established to be April 10th and tentative April 29th at 9 AM**

IX. Adjournment was passed by a motion of Fogg/Phippen at 10:45 AM.

These minutes were prepared by Anne Krieg, Planning Director and Secretary/Staff to the Task Force for distribution on April 3, 2008.